



### 186th AIR REFUELING WING

Hannah Robinson is a fourth-grade student at Newton County Elementary School. She and her parents, Steve and Vickie Robinson, live in Newton and attend Cedar Grove Baptist Church. Hannah's art teacher, Beth Lurk, asked students to draw pictures to show their support for Guardsmen, Reservists and active-duty military personnel in East Central Mississippi. Hannah chose to draw a picture of her uncle, Tech. Sgt. Ronnie Robinson of the Mississippi Air National Guard's 186th Air Refueling Wing — a full-time Guardsman, but also a preacher.



Robinson

ILLUSTRATION BY HANNAH ROBINSON

*The Meridian Star asked, "Do you know a Guardsman, Reservist or member of the active-duty military or veteran who deserves a pat on the back?" These people answered the call and submitted "Bragging Rights" entries to "Profile 2005: A Letter from Home."*

"I want to brag on my son, Lance Cpl. William 'Andy' Harrison of the U.S. Marines stationed at Camp Taqaddum, Iraq. He means the world to me and the rest of his family. He is serving this country with pride, under the worst possible conditions.

"Andy has always been liked and respected in his hometown even as a child. There is not a day that goes by that someone isn't asking how he is doing and sending their regards.

"Before he joined the Marines, he was an active member of Stonewall Assembly of God and looks forward to returning to address the youth about his time spent in Iraq.

Every time I talk to him, with the intention of lifting his spirits, it is always me who comes away uplifted. I've always known what a special person he is and I wanted everyone else to know it too. From his family, the Harrisons, the Smiths, the Shortridges and the Strouds, we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their thoughts, prayers, and words of kindness."

**Cheryl Harrison,  
Stonewall**



Harrison

## Bragging rights

"Hi to Sgt. Jeremy M. Jones of Company C, Charlie Company of the Mississippi Army National Guard. I just wanted to let you know that I am so proud of you. I miss you dearly, and I am keeping you and everybody in my thoughts and prayers. Everything is going good. Everybody said to tell you hello. I love you. God bless y'all."

**Kimberley Jones,  
Chunky**

"I want to brag on my dad, Ronnie Payne, because he's been in the military for 18 years and now he's serving our country in Iraq. I'll be glad when he gets home. I love him and miss him."

**Amber Payne**

"I want to brag on Specialist Edward B. Durr. We have been married seven years. We celebrated eight years as husband and wife on Feb. 16 ... His whole family loves him and we are very proud of him for serving his country. We all support him 100 percent during his service in the U.S. Army."

**Carmelia C. Durr**

"I want to brag on my children, Saedrick 'Raeshone' Trotter and Krystal R. Trotter because both of them made the decision to join the Army and Navy. They were given the opportunity to support their country.

"Krystal was deployed from Dec. 1, 2001 to June 18, 2002. She went back Jan. 17, 2003 and remained until July 27, 2003. Krystal was aboard the USS Bohamme Richard, when her ship supported combat operations in Afghanistan. Raeshone was deployed from Jan. 13, 2003 to July 6, 2003, and is scheduled to be deployed Jan. 3, 2005.

"It was a real ordeal to not only have two children over there to worry about, but also a brother, Jimmy Trotter. It was a

time for me to pray every day for the good Lord to give me the strength to see my loved ones sent home safely."

**Linda S. Trotter,  
Meridian**

"I want to brag on Staff Sgt. Jason S. Riley of the Mississippi Army National Guard's 155th/2198th because he is my best friend, the best husband and the most wonderful dad in the whole world. He loves his country and he believes in what this country was founded on. He also respects and believes in his crew and is very confident in their abilities. He has made his family so proud and we want him to know how much we love him and miss him and support him. We are anticipating his return and we want him to know we love you with all of our heart and soul."

**Melanie Riley**

"I want to brag on my son, Pfc. Matthew L. Ingram, because I am so proud of him. Little did I know that as soon as you graduated from infantry basic and advanced training at Ft. Benning, Ga., you would be sent to serve in South Korea and then to Iraq.

"I pray that you will be home soon and pursue your dream of a college education and career. I tell everyone where you are and what you are doing. Your grandfather, grandmother, Jamie, Randy and family, all your friends and Harry said to tell you hello and we are praying for your safe and quick return home.

"We had the family Christmas dinner at Uncle Randy's house with a large group present. We all missed you and everyone says hello. We sincerely pray that the war will be over and you will be home soon. We all miss you, especially me and Harry. We will keep the letters and packages coming until your return. I love you very much."

**Patricia Ingram, Newton**

## Smoking out the terrorists

*Greg Mangum is a sophomore at Southeast Lauderdale High School. He is the founder and president of the Lauderdale County Teenage Republicans. Greg plans to pursue a career in the ministry.*

**By Greg Mangum  
special to The Star**

Is America doing the right thing by keeping our troops overseas over this long a period of time? Many say yes

and many say no.

Some feel that we should never have begun this war. Some say our troops are doing nothing for the Iraqis other than "policing" them. Many feel that is not our job, that the Iraqis should "police" their own country.

But is that really what we are over there for? The answer to that is no!

I believe differently. I believe that our troops do have a job to do. I believe we went into Iraq to smoke out terrorists and that is exactly what our troops are doing. We've already caught Saddam and now we are trying to get rid of all of the other terrorists in the country. We should not let the troops come home to stay just yet because the job has not been completed.

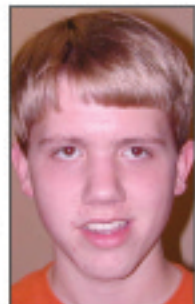
Many of the troops feel like they can't go on any longer, and that is understandable, but they must just keep holding on.

I also know that the families are getting tired of living their lives without a family member here to live it with them — but just think about how great of a family member you have, to be willing to go and fight overseas for his or her country. I myself believe that you have a very brave family member ...

To the troops overseas, I offer this advice. When you feel down and feel like you can't go on anymore, just get on your knees and call out to God, and he will surely answer. God never leaves anyone behind. He is always there right beside you. Jesus says that where you may be he may be also.

I also offer this advice to the families of the troops. Gather around as a family and pray for your loved ones overseas. The power of prayer is larger than you would expect. Single parents who feel like they are alone raising their kids, just remember that you are not alone.

God is always there to help. You just have to call upon him ...



Mangum

## Uncle Darryl: One weekend a month, and two weeks a year, for 19 years

*Danielle Jones is a sophomore at Southeast Lauderdale High School. Her "Bragging Rights" story is about her uncle, Maj. Darryl Jones of the Mississippi Air National Guard's 186th Air Refueling Wing.*

**By Danielle Jones  
special to The Star**

I want to brag on Darryl Jones because he is an outstanding person in my eyes. He has a wife and two daughters. He is a history teacher at Southeast Lauderdale High School. He is also

the assistant football coach, and he will be in charge of the track team. He has been a teacher and a coach for 10 years.

Not only is he a teacher and a coach, but he is also a Guardsman. He is part of the 186th Air Refueling Wing. He has worked for the unit one weekend a month, and two weeks a year, for 19 years. He works as the supply officer in the Logistics Readiness Squadron.

My uncle Darryl does a lot for his family, the community and for our country. I will never forget all the things he has done.

Read the rest of this  
**poem by Kate Crawford**  
in the Homes section.

" ... I miss waffles and toast,  
Home cooked meals,  
And seeing my wife,  
In her dressy high heels ... "